

FACILITATOR'S GUIDE

(Text accompanying DVD)



(1st Tab on left)

MOTIVATOR

(Narrator)

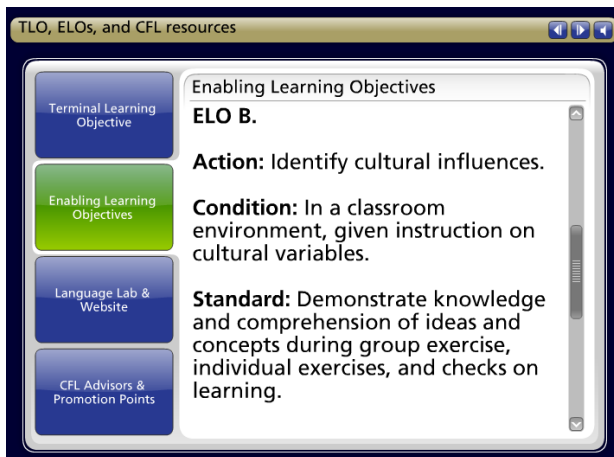
As these scenes from a U.S. Army rescue operation to Haiti in 2010, and a foot-patrol in Afghanistan, illustrate, interaction between U.S. military forces and local populations will be a critical part of future missions. Success in many respects will hinge upon the soldier's ability to understand a local culture. This means more than learning the important do's and don'ts of local etiquette. It calls for an appreciation of a culture's deepest values and interests.

(2nd tab on left)

TLO

(Narrator)

In order to grasp the fundamentals of a different culture, it's necessary to learn what the concept of culture consists of. There are some helpful synonyms like "values," "beliefs," "behavior," and so forth. But in the end the synonyms are less important than instilling an ability to converse meaningfully with a foreign counterpart and to analyze a situation taking into account significant cultural factors.



ENABLING LEARNING OBJECTIVES

(Narrator)

This video presentation offers exercises allowing students to consider contrasts between their own cultural practices and those of others. By this method students have a chance to recognize how culture serves to make certain behavior natural, or normal, in an unquestioned way. If it works this way for you and me, then it's reasonable to think it works the same way for someone else even though their practices may be very different from our own.

LANGUAGE LAB and CFL ADVISORS

(Narrator)

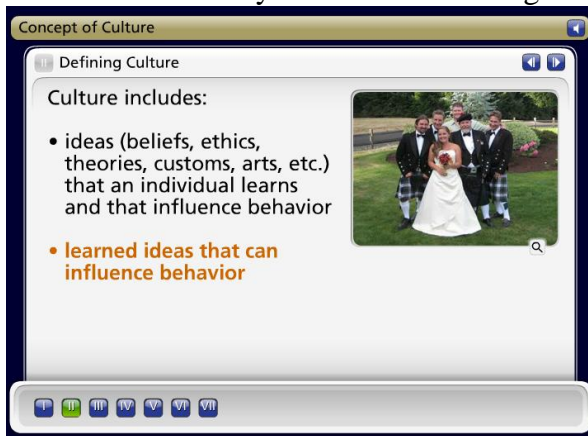
The two lower tabs provide information on the Language Lab resource at Ft. Lee, and the means for contacting the two Culture and Foreign Language Advisors at Ft. Lee. The importance of these resources for students should be stressed.

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CONCEPT of CULTURE

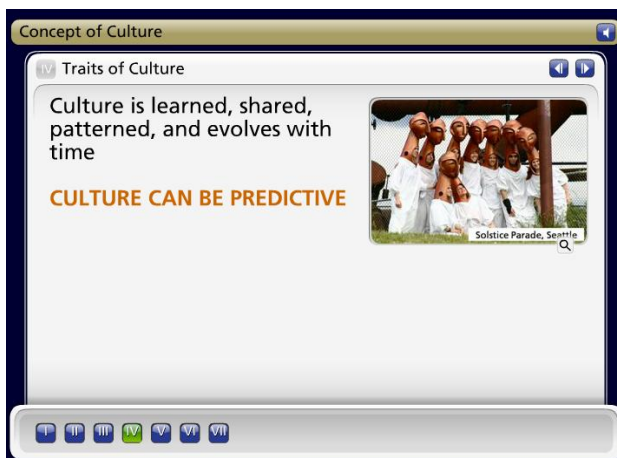
(Narrator)

Seven tabs under this heading examine some aspects of how the concept of culture ought to be understood. *Roman Numeral II*, for instance, presents the idea that though we probably don't think about it, almost everything we consider to be "culture" comes to us as something we have learned. And, since this is true of ourselves, it is likewise true for those with different cultures, even those with very different contrasting ideas and practices.

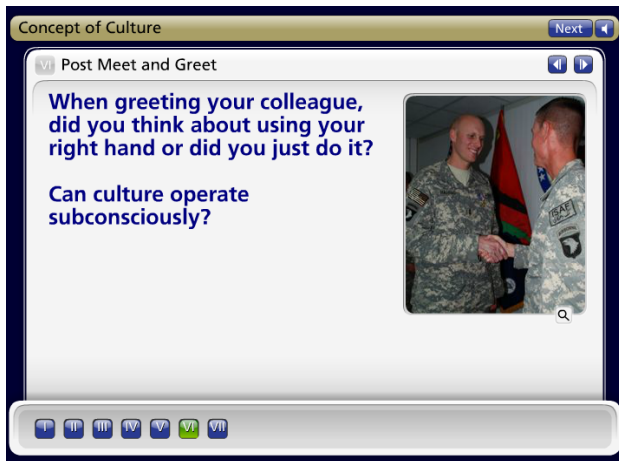




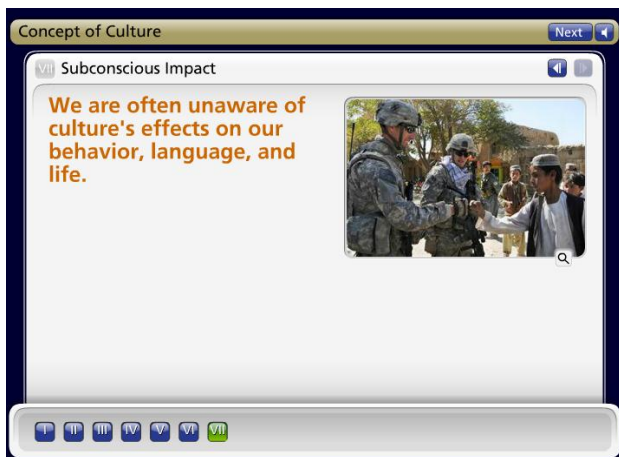
Roman Numeral III reminds students that cultures, whether our own or elsewhere, are not unchanging. Fashions change, of course, but some very basic ideas and practices can change as well. The policy of the military, for instance, concerning females in combat, and gays in uniform have changed in recent years.



An essential aspect of culture is emphasized in *Roman Numeral IV*: the concept of culture represents elements held in common by a society. Individual behavior that isn't shared by others is not what is meant by the concept of culture. Culture presents a pattern of shared traits. On the other hand, it is a good idea to remind students to remember that although this shared quality of culture allows for a certain amount of predictability, cultures are not monolithic, that is, contained within a culture there may be more than one viewpoint on a subject, even as to important fundamental subjects.



Roman Numerals V and VI offer students an opportunity to consider the concept of culture by thinking about their place in a cultural setting of their own. The U.S., of course, is made up of diverse groups – geographic, ethnic, racial, religious, and so forth. It is not so important at this stage to identify well-defined U.S. cultures, or as they are sometimes described “sub-cultures,” but rather to prompt students to begin thinking about the facets of culture already mentioned, such as that it “is learned,” “operates subconsciously and seems natural,” “can change,” et cetera.



Roman Numeral VII prompts the students to reflect on how his or her cultural behavior strikes others from a different culture, perhaps one with sharply contrasting ideas and practices. If we often act as if our way of doing things is the correct “natural” way, then it’s likely to be the case that someone from different culture will think along the same lines about their own culture. What the soldier needs to develop is a capacity to bridge this gap.

(4th tab on left)

DIVERSE FOOD HABITS

(Narrator)

This tab offers four different choices of food items that are likely to strike members of a U.S. military audience as repugnant to their own sense of what is proper to eat. The lesson here is illustrative of the earlier points. While we don't think about it, our ideas regarding food have been taught to us. As we can see in the four available video clips, an unquestioned willingness of others to consume brains (North Africa), spiders (Cambodia), insects (Thailand), and sheep heads (Morocco) proves the same is true elsewhere, despite the likely unpalatable nature of such items to an American taste.



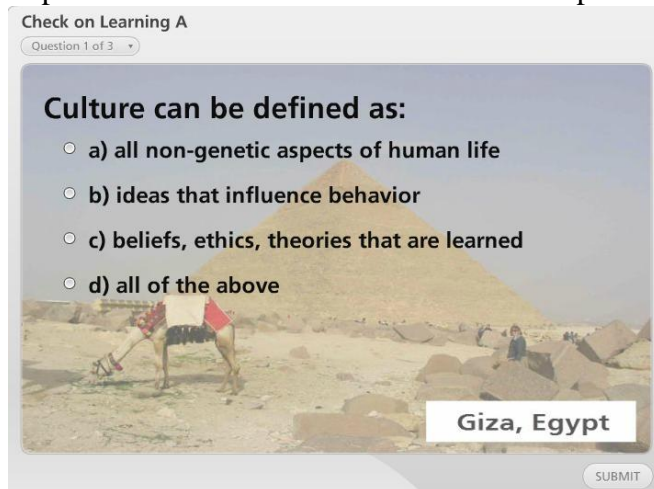
The fifth and sixth tabs from the top under Diverse Food Habits call for DISCUSSION and SUMMARY. This is the opportunity for students to apply (and the instructor to confirm) the ideas presented previously under Concept of Culture. During discussion students should be encouraged to recognize that in order to better understand another culture it would be wise to question some of the assumptions regarding their own culture. What we think is proper to eat may in some instances be chiefly a question of locale or economic strata, but it's also a good example of how cultural perspective operates. Ultimately, the lessons extend beyond questions of taste in food to more crucial matters, such as the role of women in society, or notions about adopting new technologies.

(5th tab on left)

CHECK ON LEARNING

(Narrator)

As a means of determining whether students are absorbing the material, three multiple choice questions are presented. The first addresses a primary aspect of the concept of culture, namely that it is learned, not inborn, and additionally, that components of culture tend to influence behavior. Thus, the answer to the first question is: “d) all of the above.” But it will be just as important to have a useful discussion at this point as to identify a single correct response.

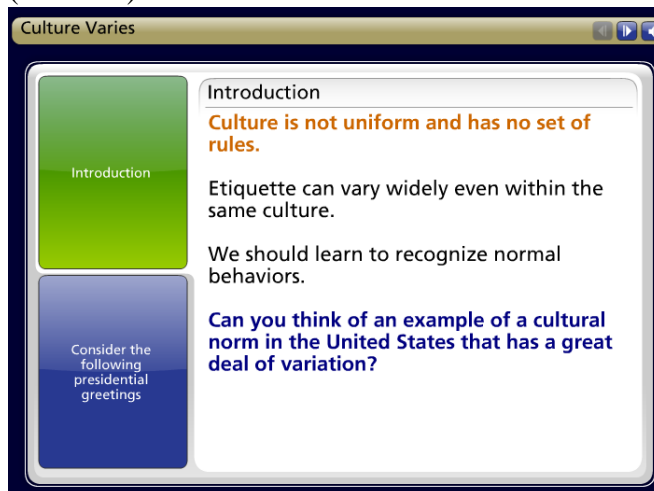


The same approach should be taken concerning questions 2 (correct answer is “e”) and 3 (correct answer “d”). The goal is for the students to become adept at handling the identified features of the “concept of culture.” Guiding classroom discussion at this point will be the instructor’s challenge.

(6th tab on left)

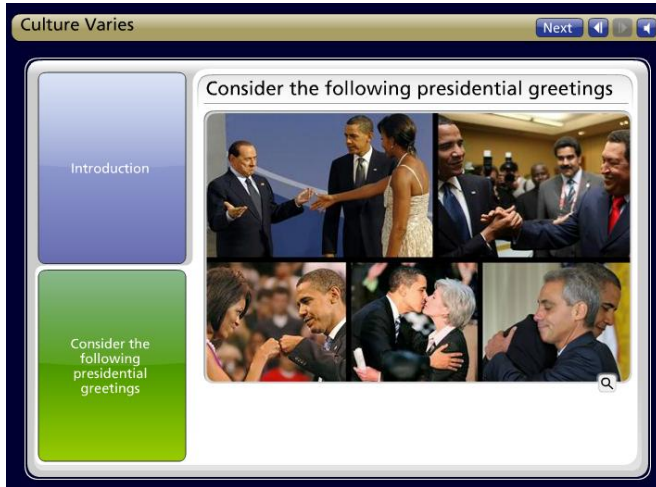
CULTURE VARIES

(Narrator)



This tab contains two slides. The first sets out four statements relating to the important idea that cultures can offer a framework for varied forms of behavior. In short, although culture may be thought of as consisting of “norms,” it is likewise accurate that within a consistent norm there is room for a great deal of variety. This is exemplified in the second slide depicting five different

settings in which President Barak Obama is involved in a cultural “norm”, namely, a greeting. In two of the images it is a foreign head of state, Silvio Berlusconi of Italy (top left) and Hugo Chavez of Venezuela (top right). With Berlusconi the greeting takes the form of a hearty embrace (with Mrs. Obama), a gesture that may be seen as characteristically Italian. Alternatively, Chavez and the U.S. president clasp hands in an informal “power handshake” sometimes witnessed on an athletic field.



In the lower tier of photos, the leftmost image shows the president bumping knuckles with his wife, in an obviously joking manner suited to the intimacy of family relationships. In the lower middle image, the president greets his Secretary of Health and Human Services, Kathleen Sibelius, with a kiss, which though intimate in some settings, is also of late appropriate between the Chief Executive and a female cabinet member. Finally, in the lower right picture, the president embraces one of his advisors Rahm Emanuel, a form of greeting reflecting the closeness of their White House interaction.

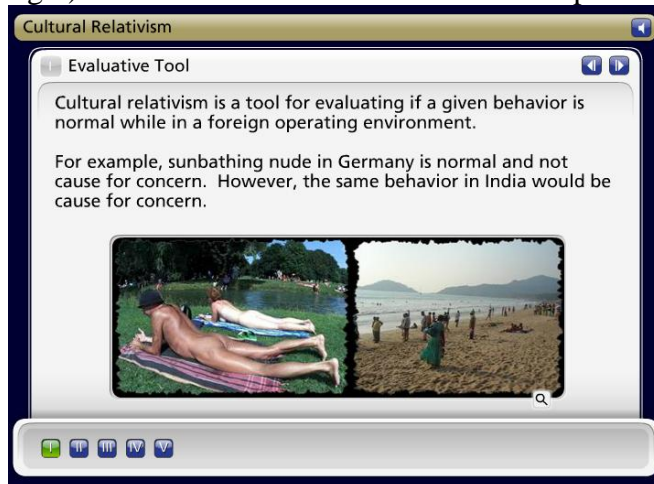
These photos and the preceding slide convey the idea that one should be alert to the possibilities of varied behavior within a cultural setting. Circumstances may call for differing, even creative, approaches.

(7th tab on left)

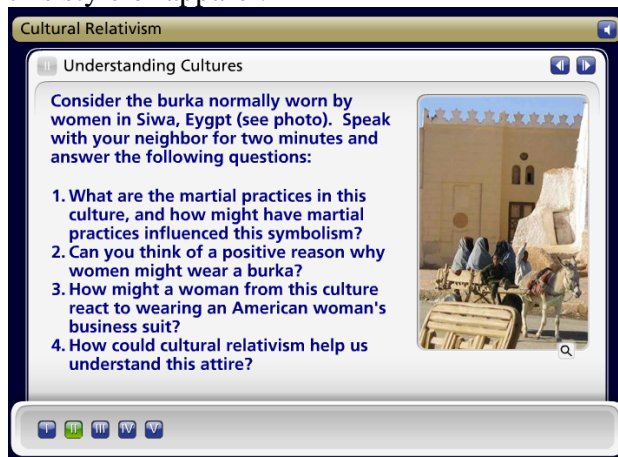
CULTURAL RELATIVISM

(Narrator)

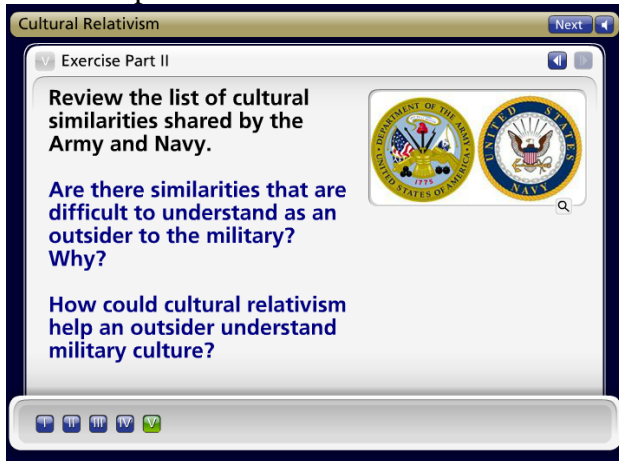
This tab offers seven buttons (bottom of slide), *Roman Numerals I through V*. Together the material examines a critical idea in the realm of cultural awareness: that all cultures should be understood “holistically,” that is, with an appreciation of how its separate parts enable a culture to function coherently and efficiently. With this appreciation, it becomes possible to accept, even respect, behavior and practices that contrast sharply with what Americans think of as “normal” or “acceptable.” The button for *Roman Numeral I*, for example, depicts a sunbathing scene, in two different locations, one (on the left) in contemporary Germany, the other (on the right) in modern India. The contrast of acceptable attire could not be more sharply defined.



The second button, *Roman Numeral II*, shows three women in Egypt wearing *burkas*, clothing covering their entire bodies. Accompanying the photograph several questions are posed. The discussion and answers to these questions are intended to prompt students to think about the way in which women’s attire functions practically, as well as symbolically to help define women’s roles in that society. If a woman’s attire stresses extreme modesty, then it is likely saying something important regarding the preferred social role of women – at least for women adopting this style of apparel.



Roman Numeral III re-emphasizes the goal of “cultural relativism” of understanding a cultural expression in context. In the final analysis this is the only way that something that looks very strange to an outsider will make sense. Drinking cow’s blood is one example cited. If we appreciate its availability as a source of protein in certain African regions, then perhaps it will be more comprehensible.



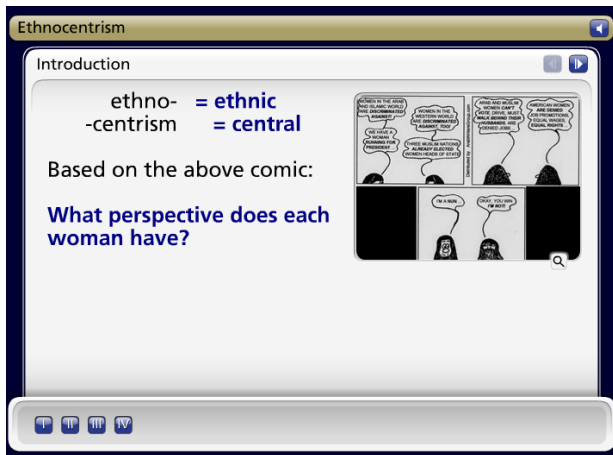
Roman Numerals IV and V comprise two parts of an exercise calling upon students to make a cultural comparison between the Army and the Navy – what might be the same and what might be different. The second part seeks to have students think about practices found in the military that may appear odd to an outsider, but which make perfect sense according to the way the military hopes to function. Students should consider, for instance, how some aspect of arbitrary military discipline promotes success in combat. It is often a good idea to judge another culture according to its own terms, rather than outside standards.

(8th tab on left)

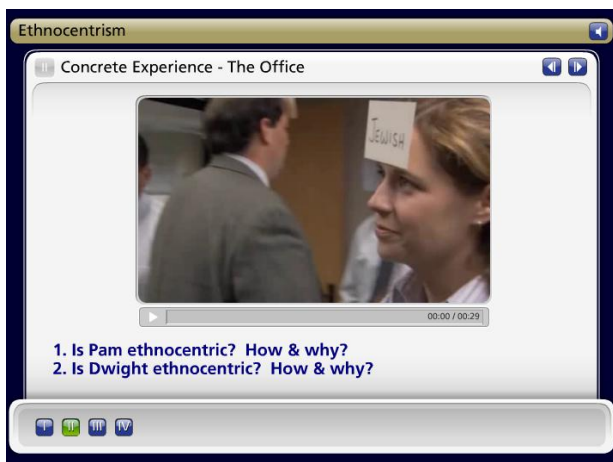
ETHNOCENTRISM

(Narrator)

Ethnocentrism is the tendency to view other cultures using standards derived from one’s own culture, usually with negative results for the other culture. The familiar aspects of one’s own culture set the standard for what is “good,” “virtuous,” “normal,” “beneficial,” and so forth. This perspective fails to take into account a multitude of factors, including, for instance, another culture’s history, level of development, religious thinking, and simply the spectrum of possible ways of imagining the world.



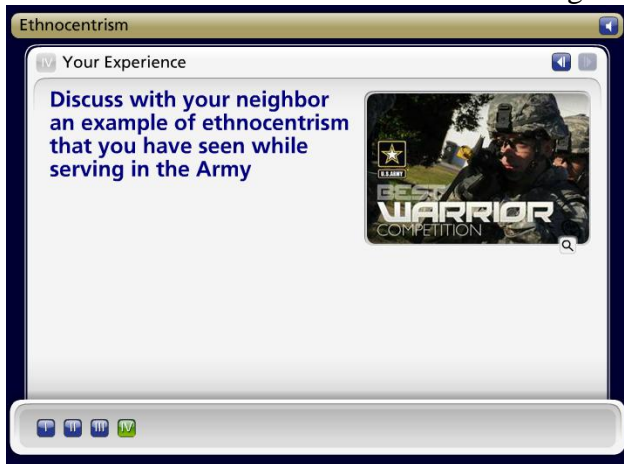
The initial tab on the left shows a cartoon in which two people are conversing, each expressing attitudes about women, the one on the left, an American, concerning women in the Arab World, the individual on the right, a non-Westerner, regarding women in the Western World. They are taking pains to point out differences in the circumstances of women in the two locations. In the last (lower) frame, it is revealed that the Western woman is a nun, whose garb closely resembles that of the Arab World woman. The punch-line should unsettle what may have been students' assumptions about women and their apparel in both places.



Roman Numeral II is a short video clip from the popular TV show *The Office*. In a humorous vignette one bumbling character exposes his predisposition to think in stereotypes, specifically regarding women drivers. Although the scene portrays an office game, the same tendencies to think stereotypically can arise in many, sometimes more critical, circumstances. The outcome may not be laughter, but a lost opportunity to promote a positive relationship. (After viewing the clip students should analyze and discuss its content and implications, referring to the questions suggested.)

Roman Numeral III identifies the bias of all cultures toward thinking ethnocentrically, to imagine that their way of doing things is “the best,” “the most advanced,” “the most consistent with nature,” and so forth. While such thinking may be expected, it fails to embrace the lessons already considered: for instance, cultures have their own histories, face different problems, and adopt varying outlooks on life. This does not mean that in relating to other cultures it becomes necessary to set aside all questions of morality. The changes in American culture, for example

the end to slavery, granting women the right to vote, and other dramatic social developments, tell us that morality is a central aspect of culture. But the best approach is to first consider a culture from the standpoint of the individual living within it. There are usually important factors that the outsider failed to think about before reaching a negative judgment.



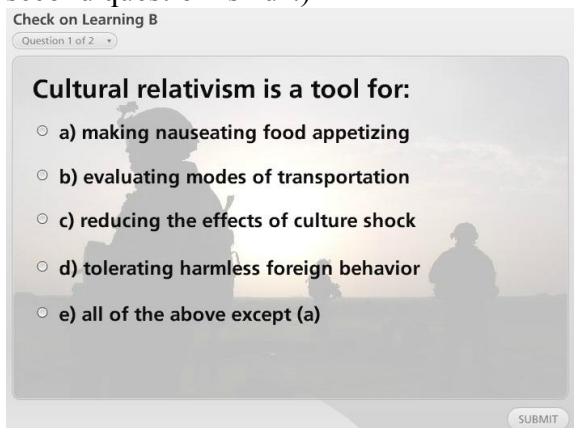
Roman Numeral IV invites students to apply the lessons of “ethnocentrism” to their military experience. Examples might include bigotry within the ranks, or antagonism directed at them due to assumptions made by others, for instance, based on wearing a military uniform.

(9th tab on left)

CHECK ON LEARNING

(Narrator)

This tab offers an opportunity to evaluate whether the concepts of cultural relativism and ethnocentrism have been absorbed by the students. Two questions are offered. The answer to Question 1 is “e”). “Cultural relativism” may allow a person to better appreciate another culture’s food items, but it does not (necessarily) make that food appetizing. On the other hand, cultural relativism ought to allow students to better understand another culture’s preferred modes of transportation. Such tolerant understanding should then lessen the effects of culture shock experienced by everyone finding himself or herself immersed in a setting where suddenly everything seems strange, backward, wrong, and highly incomprehensible. (The answer to the second question is “d”).)



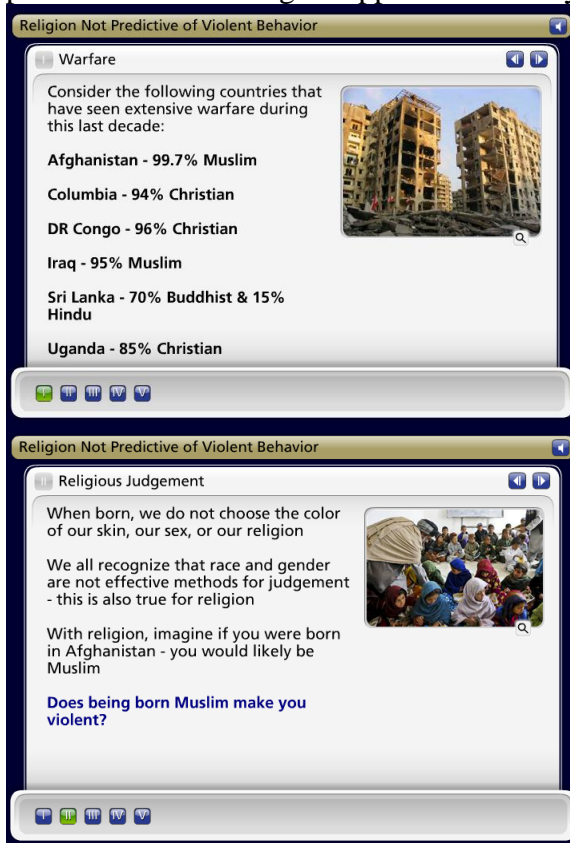
(10th tab on left)

RELIGION NOT PREDICTIVE OF VIOLENT BEHAVIOR



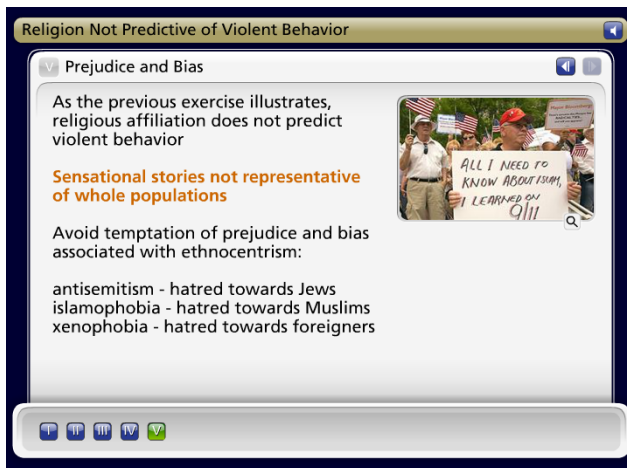
(Narrator)

Five tabs, *Roman Numerals I through V*, appear on this slide which opens with religious symbols of various faiths. *Roman Numeral I Warfare*, contains information showing that in recent times violent conflict has occurred in lands where Christian, Hindu, and Moslem believers predominate. No religion appears inherently to be more warlike or peaceable than another.



Roman Numeral II poses an important proposition: religion, like race and gender, is a part of one's identity received at birth. There is no reason to think that an infant born into one religion rather than another is more likely to be violent. We do not think this to be true about gender or race, nor should we make such assumptions based on religion.

Roman Numerals III and IV identify various sensational violent actions in recent years' headlines. As evidenced in tab IV, the ostensible religious affiliation of the person committing the violence seems remotely connected, or altogether unconnected, to the acts.



Roman Numeral V summarizes the content of the earlier Roman Numerals under the heading Religion Not Predictive of Violent Behavior. It is not reasonable to brand an entire group, religious or otherwise, based on the actions of a single individual or a minor segment from the larger group, who themselves oppose the violent actions of the individual or segment. We would not want that to happen to one of us, nor should we impose this view on others.

(11th tab on left)

CULTURE SHOCK

(Narrator)

The Culture Shock tab explores the widespread sense of estrangement and isolation experienced by outsiders in foreign settings. The slide offers six tabs found on the left side that enable students to better grasp the nature and source of these feelings.



The first video, “Mud plate lips,” presents girls displaying a form of body modification, elongation of lips, considered signs of beauty among young women in that region of Africa. This may seem odd to an American, but for them it is a mark of distinction, no more objectionable than the decision of some women in the U.S. to have breast implants.



The second video, "Bullfighting in Spain," depicts the conclusion of a Spanish bullfight. The audience's applause at the ring expresses its appreciation of the matador's skill and bravery. Many in the U.S. may be repulsed by what they see as cruel torment of an animal. But a Spaniard sees the bull as a dignified creature contributing to the celebration a time-honored national pageant.

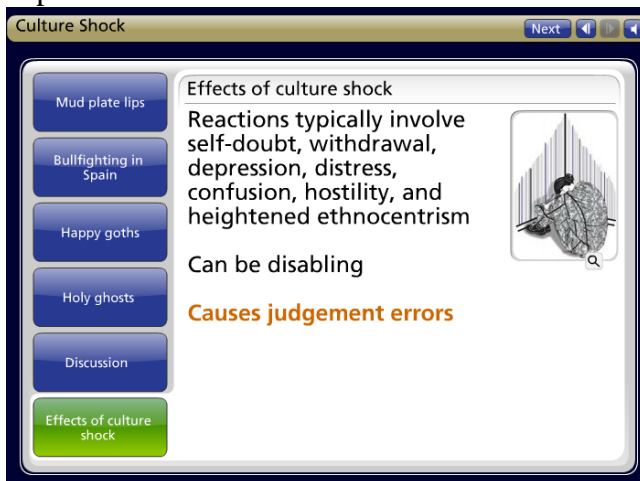


The next video labeled "Happy goths" shows a contemporary European festival where young individuals identifying themselves as "goth" have gathered. This crowd displays distinctive forms of dress, music, tattooing and body piercing. Their appearance may strike an outsider as deliberately intended to set themselves apart from conventional society, and for that reason objectionable.



The fourth video, "Holy ghosts," is a film of two young women in the U.S., who are undergoing trance behavior associated with certain fundamentalist Christian groups. This is unusual for most American religious settings, but more common in other places around the world. For anyone unaccustomed to seeing trance states this behavior may be quite disturbing.

The next slide invites students to engage in discussion of the videos. Specifically, they should ask themselves about their reactions. Did one or more of the videos cause them to feel uncomfortable? Nauseated? Angry? Sad? Or, some other negative sensation? What was it about the scene (or scenes) that provoked these feelings? Was it entirely rational? While examining their reactions, students should ask themselves whether they would be able to work alongside people who engage in the practices shown. Finally, since many students have previously been deployed, discussion can cover forms of culture shock they may already have experienced.

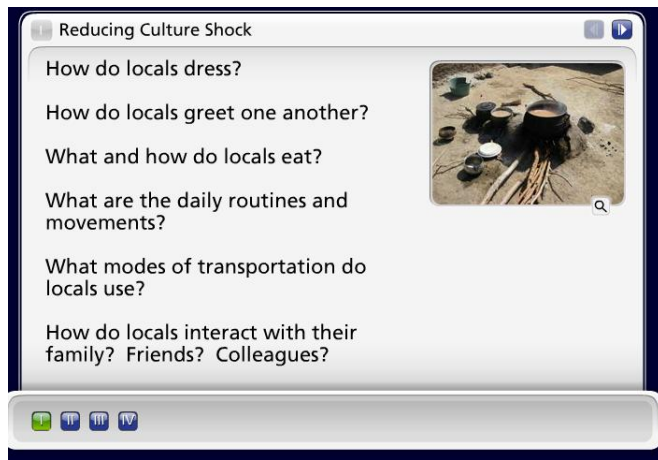


The DISCUSSION regarding culture shock (last slide: "Effects of Culture Shock"), offers some suggestions worth touching on: "self-doubt," "withdrawal," "depression," "distress," "confusion," "hostility, and "heightened ethnocentrism." It should be noted this list is not exhaustive; other kinds of reactions contributing to culture shock are also possible, as well as varying degrees of each of the named reactions – from mild and passing, to extreme and long-lasting. The importance of recognizing "culture shock" is not limited to the individual himself or herself. It is also important for those in command to be able to recognize it in a subordinate, and respond accordingly with appropriate measures.

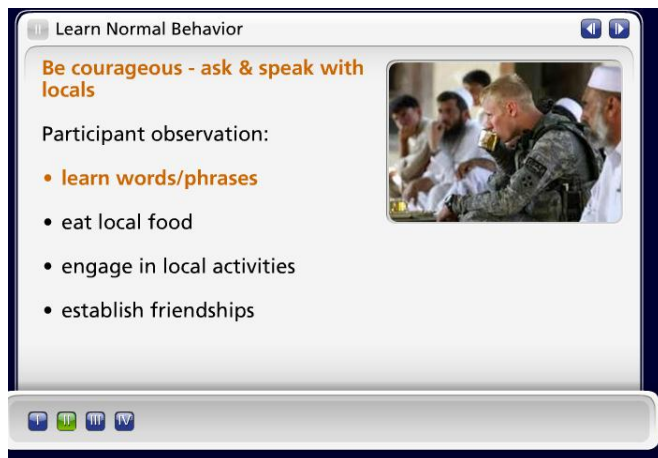
(12th tab on left)

RECOGNIZING NORMAL VARIATION IN CULTURE

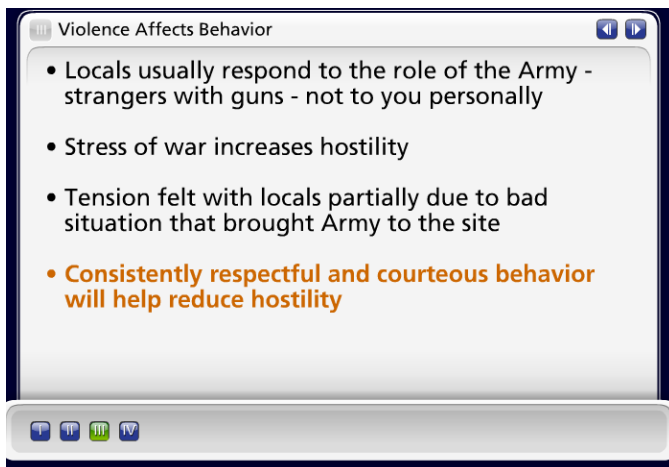
(Narrator)



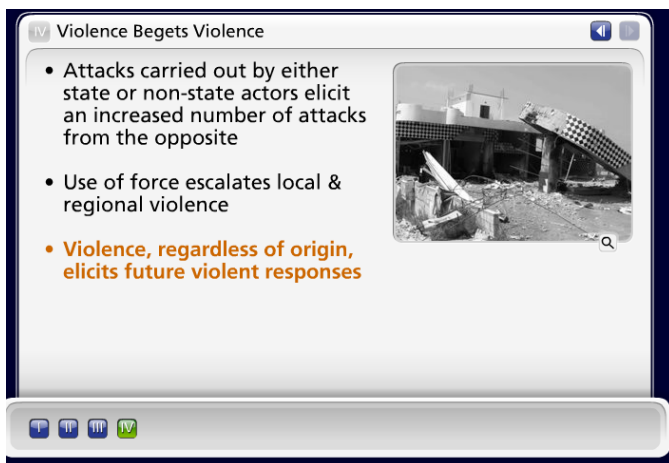
This tab presents four slides that will aid in diminishing the effects of culture shock. The first labeled “Reducing Culture Shock” suggests that someone who is deployed should take an interest in learning some basics about the local populace – their dress, their foods, their customary greetings, transportation, and how they interact with friends. The simple process of acquiring a basic familiarity with these local features, will help dispel the sense of isolation and antagonism.



The second slide suggests some methods for gaining a familiarity with the local population. They are the customary ways that a student of anthropology would use in the field: learn some of the language, starting with greetings; try the local food; attend a festival, or other event; make a new friend. This may require a touch of bravado at first, but it becomes easier with practice.



The third slide “Violence Affects Behavior” focuses on questions raised among locals in response to armed strangers in their midst. This too can be a factor contributing to culture shock, since a state of tension is almost unavoidable. If a soldier understands and anticipates this situation, he or she will be able to take it into account and have a better perspective when it comes to assessing relationships with the people around him or her. One key is to maintain a consistent attitude of courtesy and respect. This should be possible, even while being aware of potential threats.



Lastly, the fourth slide under this tab, points out that commonly a resort to violence can be expected to provoke additional violence. If culture shock – its nature, ways of resisting it, and counteracting it – is kept in mind, then the likelihood of finding oneself in this spiraling situation will be lessened.

(13th tab on left)

EXERCISE

(Narrator)

The final left tab opens a class exercise on what has been presented. The call is for students to find examples of “variation in American culture.” This raises many possibilities, since the U.S. is a country with a multitude of regional, religious, ethnic, racial, and other groupings. The goal of the exercise is not to settle whether there is an identifiable “American culture,” numerous “sub-cultures,” or wide variance within a single culture. Rather, with this exercise, students should develop a clearer understanding of the benefits of questioning assumptions about their own culture, plus increased appreciation for the role of culture in the lives of others. These lessons in turn should be carried with them as they are deployed.

